



# **SOCIAL COHESION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS & CHANGING EXPECTATIONS**

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NOVEMBER 2005

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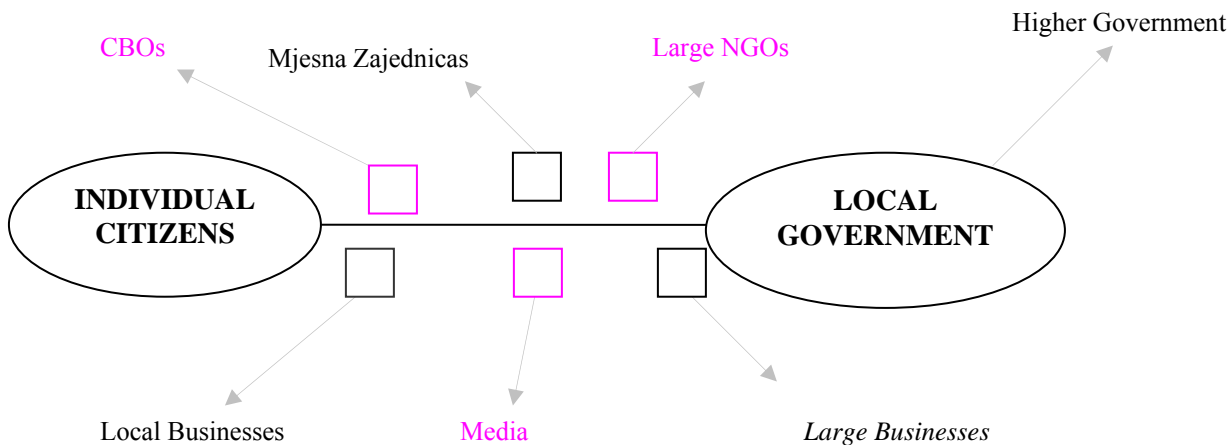
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## INTRODUCTION

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Civil society strengthening has been a basic tenet of post-war development work in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter B&H). While acknowledging the importance of that work, especially with respect to strengthening local NGOs and enhancing their ability to serve local citizens, this research goes beyond civil society studies to explore the essential components of local community development in B&H. Civil society actors, those who fill the space between citizens and the government (excluding the market)<sup>1</sup>, are but one piece of the development puzzle in B&H, and this research shows that those actors have been emphasized to the detriment of full utilization of other actors in local development. In particular, the role of *Mjesna Zajednicas*<sup>2</sup> has been overlooked, neglected and often corrupted by external interventions in local communities. Additionally, the 'endpoints' of civil society—citizens and the government—have too often been neglected in the focus on civil society actors. The figure below shows a selection of some of the most important 'development players' in B&H, and only those highlighted in pink reflect players included in the traditional framework of civil society.

FIGURE 1: DEVELOPMENT PLAYERS



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<sup>1</sup> Civil Society is subject to various definitions, this definition closely matches that used by USAID's Bosnia-Herzegovina mission in its assessments as well as that employed by many scholars in the field.

<sup>2</sup> Mjesna Zajednicas (MZs) are elected community councils that operated throughout B&H before the war but now operate sporadically across the country. They are linked to the municipal governments but operate as a something of a hybrid governmental/non-governmental body.

This work began as an exploration primarily of citizens and their perceptions of and interactions with both civil society actors and their local community in more general terms. It evolved over time, however, into an analysis of the roots of community entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup> and the necessary conditions for a certain level of community autonomy and development potential. The role of leadership was clearly essential in all of the communities included in this study; both individual leadership and institutional leadership play necessary, but distinct, roles. Individual leaders had essential roles in promoting citizen participation in community activities and in developing relationships with other actors. These relationships between (institutional) actors are reliant upon individual leadership and, especially, individual democratic skills.<sup>4</sup> However, the individual is not enough. Institutions are essential.

Researching institutions that are effective in gaining citizens' trust, it became apparent that organizational structure and particularly local representation were key factors of organizations' abilities to earn the trust of citizens. Additionally, a level of institutional and personal familiarity contributed to enhanced trust in many cases. Institutions, in order to contribute to an endogenous sense of community entrepreneurship, must have a long-term if not permanent commitment to the community itself. This includes institutions based in the local community and the demonstrated commitment of those organizations working in the community but based outside of it, which I call 'secondary community institutions.'

These secondary community institutions, those committed to but based outside of the community itself, are key elements of community entrepreneurship in their ability to serve as a bridge out of the community—connecting the community to local government officials and offices<sup>5</sup> as well as to international donors and other local actors. The best way for any organization to earn community members' trust, necessary to serve as a bridge out, is to cultivate close relationships through effective personal leadership and, most importantly, to provide examples of success in concrete benefits to the community.

For all the importance of institutions, which should not be underestimated, there are cultural factors and community characteristics (which are not, by any stretch, static) that affect the work of these institutions and the endogenous levels of community entrepreneurship in any given community. The most relevant of these community factors for this work can be summarized as a series of expectations: the expectations that citizens have for themselves, for their neighbors, and for their government.

Exploring the expectations that citizens have for themselves, neighbors and the government now, and how those expectations have changed over time, provides clues for how community interventions—

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<sup>3</sup> I employ the term 'community entrepreneurship' throughout this work to refer to a community's endogenous sense of start-up ability. This term refers to a level of partial autonomy that allows community leaders, institutions and residents to begin collective actions through their own efforts and effectively seek help from outside sources as necessary.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this text, the term democratic skills refers to skills such as advocacy, strategic framing of initiatives and coalition building, among others. Democratic skills are those skills necessary to build relationships and access information necessary for productive community life.

<sup>5</sup> Relationships with government officials refer to personal relationships, while relationships with government offices refer to institutional relationships throughout this text.

either by local NGOs or international actors—can more effectively promote community entrepreneurship and community development. The evidence gathered in these three communities points to the importance of social cohesion<sup>6</sup> within communities as a factor contributing to entrepreneurship (especially with respect to people's expectations of their neighbors) and to the important influence of effective community activities on levels of social cohesion in the communities. Social cohesion is both a condition for community entrepreneurship and a potential output of well-designed interventions. Promoting and capitalizing upon social cohesion through including all development players, rather than over-emphasizing civil society, can best provide the basis for community entrepreneurship and sustainable local development in B&H.

### **A Brief Word on Methodology**

The analysis and evidence that follows draws on ethnographic work conducted in each of three case study communities. This is a highly abbreviated portrayal of that work focused on drawing conclusions from the stories of each community. Please see [www.mozaik.ba](http://www.mozaik.ba) for full ethnographic sketches of the communities as well as a more in-depth analysis of both the relevant literature on social cohesion, social capital and civil society and the evidence drawn from this research. All quotations presented in this work are from personal interviews and focus groups; the analysis presented herein is based on over 90 interviews conducted by the author while she was residing in the study communities with local families, as well as interviews with mayors and other government officials in each of the municipalities included in this study.

### **The Study Communities**

The three communities included in this study are returnee communities, meaning that the geographically defined community was entirely dissolved during the war. Each community, Tegare (Bratunac municipality), Kamenica (Teslić municipality) and Kupres, was selected in consideration of its current levels of community activities and participation, economic dynamics, geographic location, and mix of ethnic populations. Each of the communities had a different wartime fate, a different range of educational backgrounds, and a uniquely organized return process after the war. In addition, each has been the recipient of distinct types of interventions in the post-war period: Tegare received substantial assistance and significant intervention from international agencies, Kamenica received substantial material assistance with limited intervention, and Kupres received little assistance of any kind.

Due to the careful selection process and additional, cursory, research in other communities, there is every reason to believe that the results from these communities are relevant to other communities (excepting

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<sup>6</sup> Mozaik defines social cohesion in its vision as 'a state of harmonious and productive social relations where community members, irrespective of their differences in social and economic status, share common values and goals, have a sense of mutual commitment and belonging to the community, a sense of solidarity, responsibility and mutual recognition, and participate in activities for the common goal.' The overlap between this definition and mainstream definitions of social capital are explored in introduction to the lengthier version of this research, available at [www.mozaik.ba](http://www.mozaik.ba).

major urban centers) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, the principles set forth regarding the importance of expectations, experiences and frequently overlooked institutions that fall outside of the definition of civil society are likely relevant to efforts outside of the borders of B&H as well.

### **Acknowledgments**

I am indebted to the many people who shared coffee, thoughts, and valuable time with me over the course of this research, particularly the families who welcomed me into their homes. In addition, I am grateful for the support of the Duke University Sanford Institute for Public Policy Hart Fellows Program, which financed and advised on this research, and Urban Institute and the Association of Young Linguists and Translators in B&H who gave in-kind contributions to support the presentation of this research in Sarajevo, November 2005.

## Tegare

### **Introduction**

The village of Tegare sits on the Drina River in Northeastern B&H, approximately 10 kilometers from the city of Bratunac. Tegare has seen better days: its infrastructure remains largely destroyed from the war and most families who live there are now incomplete. Many Serb men were killed in fighting in the early years of the war (1992-1993), while most of the Bosniak men were killed after the Fall of Srebrenica (1995). This once vibrantly multiethnic village has been reduced to about 40 households, one store, and a small school with four pupils. Before the war community residents often worked in nearby mines and factories; the current economy is almost entirely dependent upon subsistence agriculture. The high levels of trust and close friendships between neighbors of differing ethnicities are largely a thing of the past; despite remaining 'first neighbors,' Bosniaks and Serbs live in socially separate communities that I will refer to as 'Serb Tegare' and 'Bosniak Tegare' throughout this text.

### **Community Entrepreneurship and Institutional Leadership**

#### *Individual Leadership: A necessary, but inadequate, precondition*

Tegare does not have any formal community organizations, but numerous international organizations, Mozaik Foundation, the Bratunac-based NGO 'Priroda,' and a Mjesna Zajednica that includes three other communities have all worked in the village in the last five years. Within the village, there is one clear leader, Sabrija Halilović, who organized the return of the Bosniaks (1998-2000) and has remained the informal but broadly recognized leader of Bosniak Tegare. Bosniak residents of Tegare say that when they need help they approach Sabrija and Serbs recognize him as the leader of Bosniaks. Some Serbs, especially the men, recognize Sabrija as not only a leader for the Bosniaks but also someone who has been a community leader in general. Said Petar, one Serb man, 'Since Sabrija came here, he has somehow been a great man. I don't know how to explain it, in which way to say it, but he is a man of good sense.'

Petar himself displays a number of leadership qualities and seems to possess the potential to be a second community-wide leader and a leader for Serb Tegare in particular. He is one of the few members of the community who has received assistance from the local government following his direct petitions. However, it seems unlikely that he will step forward as a leader without being asked to do so by someone else. Alone, he feels incapable of doing anything to improve life in his community, 'With help, I could do something,' he said. 'But without help..., ' he drifted off.

Both Sabrija and Petar care deeply about Tegare and all of the residents who live there, with Sabrija currently looking to help a Serb neighbor repair her chicken coop and Petar recognizing the importance of repairing a road that ran primarily past Bosniaks' homes. In addition to the fact that Petar lacks the

confidence and direct opportunity to act as a community leader, both men are also lacking crucial democratic skills and institutions within which they can effectively function as community representatives.

Key among the democratic skills that these two men are lacking is advocacy-neither seems to have the skills to speak effectively with government officials regarding the needs of their community. This is partially a result of the absence of institutions (examined below) and partially a reflection of the fact that neither man is conditioned to effectively framing assistance as an investment in Tegare. Tegare's citizens' abilities to work across ethnic lines in an area of the RS where such projects are highly attractive and rare as well as citizens' wide range of applicable skills (construction highest among them) are both selling points for village activities. However, Sabrija in particular is accustomed to working with international organizations that have not required such local contributions (in fact bringing builders from faraway Bihać rather than drawing on local skills). This experience has left Sabrija with the sense that to attract assistance he must emphasize what Tegare lacks rather than what Tegare offers, a framework that is not effective in attracting municipal government investment. In addition, Sabrija lacks experience in developing strategies for attracting investment and organizing activities without external impetus. As he said to me one day, 'We do not know where to begin. What do we do?' The skills necessary to answer this question are lacking, and until local citizens possess them, this all important question will remain unanswered.

#### *The Importance of Long-Term, Institutionalized Relationships*

Important as the skills that Tegare's individual leader and potential leader lack are, the most important obstacle to community entrepreneurship in Tegare is the lack of institutions and institutionalized leadership within the community. International organizations, chief among them Care International BH, were involved with reconstruction projects in Tegare through 2003. Care's programs included a civil society project, in which Mozaik and Priroda were involved. However, among these three organizations, *not one of them* has a long term commitment to working in Tegare. Priroda, which works in the area surrounding Tegare, comes closest to having a long-term commitment to the village as they are based locally and have relationships with Tegare's citizens but are not active in Tegare over the long-term.

Priroda worked with Mozaik and Care to help citizens of Tegare to construct a road in 2003. This project mobilized an impressive number of volunteers of both nationalities (see the examination of participation below) and involved serious negotiations with the municipal government and mayor regarding ownership of the land. Support from the mayor was essential to resolving this leadership dispute, however, Mozaik and Priroda assumed primary advocacy roles during this process and skills transfer to Tegare's citizens was minimal. Priroda's staff members acquired important democratic skills and built a lasting relationship with the municipal government through this project that have transformed the work of the organization. However, this has failed to transform the village of Tegare in part because Priroda is not an institution with a long-term commitment to working specifically in Tegare.

### *Representation and Trust: Necessary for Effective Local Institutions*

The Mjesna Zajednica that ostensibly represents Tegare also includes the nearby villages of Orlica and Zapolje. Superficially, the three villages are similar (especially with respect to ethnic and age demographics and poverty levels). However, there are key differences between the villages in terms of what villagers identify as their own priority needs. In Tegare, citizens identify water as being the number one need in the community; in Orlica electricity occupies this spot. This would not be a problem, but for the fact that the Mjesna Zajednica leadership and the residents of Orlica in general do not recognize these differences. Instead, the leader of the Mjesna Zajednica (from Orlica) operates under the assumption that the needs in both communities are the same and thus uses his position as the official community representative to advocate for those needs that he and his neighbors have identified.

There is a fundamental distance between the Mjesna Zajednica and Tegare's villagers that is multifaceted in its origins and importance. The roots of the distance all boil down to distrust: Bosniaks distrust the Mjesna Zajednica largely because it is dominated by Serbs (in accordance with post-war population patterns in the three villages)—some of whom Bosniaks believe had questionable war-time roles—whereas Serbs in Tegare distrust the Mjesna Zajednica due to their dissatisfaction with its work and sense that it is not really for the citizens of Tegare. Said one Serb woman, 'Sabrija fights for his. Dragan (The MZ president, a Serb) is not ours; he does not fight for us.'

Part of this feeling that the MZ does not fight for Tegare's citizens is a result of insufficient information. The MZ has apparently not communicated its work effectively to Tegare's citizens as many were unaware that Tegare even has an MZ and most were unaware that the MZ was responsible for building the school in Tegare (near the border with Orlica). Because they feel that the MZ does not represent their interests or fight for their needs, many of Tegare's citizens have written off participation in the MZ, thereby denying Tegare the chance to participate in the one permanent local institution that could serve as a bridge between Tegare and the municipality and the outside world in general.

### *The Role of Isolation*

Before the war, Tegare was well-connected to other villages in the area as well as to Bratunac itself through both personal relationships and frequent buses. Because many of Tegare's citizens worked outside of the municipality (either in nearby Srebrenica municipality or in Belgrade), many citizens had close relationships with people outside of the village. Now, however, Tegare is isolated both geographically (buses are now rare) and personally (the agriculturally-based economy entails little outside interaction).

Although Sabrija and other citizens (including many women) have relationships with Priroda's staff, Priroda has decided that it is time to observe the community on its own and assess the impact of their work. While it is admirable that Priroda seeks to equip the community to work without intervention, previous projects (2 of them) failed to provide community members with the skills necessary to complete such work



independently. In addition, the lack of institutions within the community makes it difficult if not impossible for community leaders to form lasting bridges to the outside world (even the municipality), a key component of community development. Even if individual leaders, such as Sabrija, were more capable of forming such bridges, those bridges would be personal rather than institutional in nature and, as such, would likely not outlast Sabrija's own personal leadership or, perhaps more significantly, the personal roles of individuals in the municipality with whom he might form relationships. Priroda is well-positioned to serve as such an institutional bridge but has resisted this role out of a desire to promote village self-sufficiency and a lack of funds for specific projects in Tegare.

### **The Nature and Role of Expectations**

Tegare's community dynamics are undeniably shaped by the demographics of the village and by the dramatic demographic changes that have shocked the village's population over the last decade. Before the war, Tegare was a majority Muslim village with a significant Serb minority and a normal population distribution of men and women and young and old. Now, the village consists of mostly elderly women and has a Serb majority and a significant Bosniak minority. An entire generation of men are missing from this village, killed in the war as mentioned earlier in this chapter or residing elsewhere in B&H or abroad. The social schism between Serbs and Muslims, while not hostile, is very real and dramatically different from the pre-war, highly integrated community dynamic that Tegare once claimed.

#### *Expectations of Self*

This demographic shift, above all the predominance of elderly women within the population, has resulted in most citizens having very low expectations for themselves with respect to their roles or potential roles in the community. Within the Serb population, loneliness, desperation and a sense of abandonment play important roles in shaping citizen's perceptions of their own place within the community. Most women cite the absence of men as the reason that they cannot work to make their communities better, with statements such as 'She has no children! She is just a woman alone. If anyone can help, they are welcome,' and 'We don't have men, we don't have anything,' being quite common.

Bosniak women too tend to cite this lack of men as a reason that the village cannot move forward. Said one woman, 'We do not have men...If we do not have men, we need to call someone else and then we need to pay.' As noted, many of these missing men have died; however, the majority of the women in Tegare have at last one living child elsewhere in B&H or abroad. The primary reason that these young men have not returned to Tegare is the village's lack of employment opportunities and profound isolation. Said one man who has four living sons outside of Tegare, 'Our children do not have work. The biggest problem is that firms that worked (here) before do not work now. I have four children, and before the war all of them worked. Now, even if they would come here, they would not find work.' An additional factor that prevents

many citizens from expecting much of themselves vis-à-vis community participation is age. Many residents aged 55 and over consider themselves too old to contribute anything valuable and generally rely on the absence of young people to explain their inaction in the same way that women rely on the absence of men to explain their inaction.

Participation in the Care BH/Mozaik/Priroda road construction project was clearly shaped by gender. Many Serb women indicated that they were indifferent about the road project, saying that it was for the returnees (while Serb men were not likely to express this opinion). When asked if any women participated in the road project, most Bosniak women replied with statements such as, 'That wasn't women's work.' However, women did help to clear small branches, make coffee, and help the men working on the road however they could. As Emina said, 'We all worked on the road. We did little things to build it, whatever was needed. We all worked like that as a community for the first time on this road. We worked little by little. We helped one another.' While women were not included in the official 'volunteer count,' women's contributions to the road project were real even if they were unrecognized, even by the women themselves.

### *Expectations of Neighbors*

The recognized participants in the road construction project were eight local men, four Serbs and four Bosniaks. This project was the first project that brought the Bosniaks and Serbs together since the war, and those who did participate recall it as a positive experience that they would happily repeat. Most who participated in the road did so because they were asked to do so specifically by Sabrija. Petar said, 'Sabrija called the Serbs and Muslims to work together on the road. I worked on it because it would make something better...Muslim returnees have houses up there. We need to get to the trees in the forest and some returnees need to rebuild houses up there.' Petar seems to have been motivated largely by the invitation to participate and secondarily by the benefit that he expected his neighbors and himself to gain from the project.

Part of the reason that Sabrija's appeal for participation was so effective was because he operated with a basic expectation that people should participate in the project because it would benefit the community. Both because the project would clearly benefit the community and because Sabrija is the trusted leader of Tegare, his appeal and expectation that neighbors would help was well received. Because the experience with constructing the road was positive, those who did participate all said that they would be willing to participate in a similar project again.

In addition, those who participated in the road project clearly remember who participated in the project and who did not. One man talked about the planning meetings for the project and then proceeded to list the names of all in attendance. While this has the potential to create a negative or divisive dynamic, it has not yet had an apparent negative impact and may even represent the beginning of a collective expectation that community members will actively participate in activities that benefit the community.

It is not clear, however, that trust within Tegare (especially between the Serb and Bosniak communities) is at a level high enough to provide citizens with faith in reciprocal agreements—faith that neighbors will work to help them if they work to help their neighbors. While it is clear that relationships within Tegare are far better than outsiders might expect knowing the history of the village, it is equally apparent that relationships between residents of differing nationalities are vastly different from their pre-war friendships. In post-war Tegare, informal gatherings of community members for coffee are rarely if ever mixed groups. When residents need sugar or another form of non-urgent assistance, they approach community members of their same ethnicity. In emergencies, citizens help each other, but daily routines happen in parallel, ethnically distinct social communities.

Asked about trust between neighbors, one Bosniak man replied, "So much I trust, and so much I do not trust. I would know who is for my returnees." This sense of limited trust was common: Although many people immediately said 'yes' when asked if they trusted their neighbors (both of the same ethnicity and of differing ethnicities), they usually went on to say things like, 'I can say that I do not trust (my neighbors), but for the others I am not sure of anything. It's not bad, but it's not good. I don't trust.' This distrust limits neighbors' expectations of one another, especially regarding work for collective benefit.

### *Expectations of Government*

Another division between the two national communities within Tegare relates to their experiences with and expectations of both the government and international agencies. Among the Serb community, there is a common sentiment that 'After the war, the Muslims got everything,' which contributes to a strong tide of resentment. Post-war assistance in Northeastern B&H, especially international assistance, has focused on refugee return and as such the majority of that assistance targeted Bosniaks. In addition, many Serbs feel that the local government has provided inadequate assistance.

Bosniaks in Tegare too feel that there have been inequities in post-war assistance distribution, commenting that 'When Muslims go for help in the Republic of Srpska, we are always last in line.' Anger toward the municipal government for neglecting their needs is particularly strong in the Bosniak community. Said one Bosniak man, 'There are some differences in (Tegare) based on municipal assistance. I am mad at the municipality. People in some villages have received help to build houses, but not one of them has been in Tegare ... I also listen to the television, to the radio Republika Srpska, when it says that the municipality has a donation of a million and a half marks for returnees. My village has not gotten one cent.'

This lack of government assistance for Tegare is in part a result of the fact that the community is not adequately involved with or represented by the local Mjesna Zajednica. The mayor of Bratunac Municipality has cooperated extensively with the MZ in its community development efforts and says that his future plans for community development in the municipality will continue to rely heavily upon the MZs.

Chronic disappointment with the government has resulted in very low expectations of the government on the part of Tegare's residents, despite the fact that voter turnout among villagers is remarkably high. The most frequent response to questions about voting included statements such as, 'I vote so that things will be better,' followed by a quiet pause and the remark, 'However, nothing is better.'

One man's comment was particularly revealing, 'We vote for a better life,' he said, sharing a laugh with his wife. 'They promise us everything, but later ... (he paused). The municipality has never come here, and we have never looked for them. We count on Care and international organizations for help.'

In their reliance on external organizations, the people of Tegare have become accustomed to expecting, and in turn demanding, very little of the local municipal authorities. When asked if they can make life better in their own community, many people responded, '(We could make things better) if we had some help. Alone, we cannot do anything, only with foreigners. Here, we don't have (anything). We wait for the government, but have nothing. They are not interested in my life; no one has come to see how I live.'

Priroda and UNDP supported an additional initiative in Tegare, in cooperation with the neighboring village of Orlica, called the Women's Action Team project. Through a series of meetings, 15 women participated in activities focused on team work, future-planning, assigning economic value to women's household work, domestic violence, and seeking outside help to solve problems. At the conclusion of the project, 4,000 KM were available for a project identified by the women. The women wanted to address problems with the water supply, which was far more expensive than the available 4,000 marks. Priroda sought additional help from the local government but Tegare's citizens remain without water. As one woman who participated in the project said, 'It would have been better if we had only 3 or 4 people and got something done. What good are meetings when I still have no water?'

This project, and this woman's comments, highlights the importance of including a tangible improvement to community life *even in programs seeking to strengthen civil society*. The Action Team project had only pennies to offer compared to the enormity of community problems and without the ability to build partnerships with the government to gain additional funding, the project was unable to concretely improve community life. Just as positive collective efforts, such as the road project, contribute to building trust and increasing participation in future endeavors, so too do negative experiences contribute to a hesitancy to participate in future projects and an expectation of the inevitable failure of collective action.

## **Conclusions**

Tegare's experiences clearly demonstrated the important roles played by institutions and expectations. Tegare's lack of legitimate, local institutions renders even notable personal leadership, including that demonstrated by Sabrija, to the margins. In addition, the lack of such institutions means that individuals who might otherwise rise to leadership positions, such as Petar, never assume leadership responsibilities. In addition, the lack of institutions deprives Tegare of a system which might facilitate the

transfer of democratic skills between citizens and between citizens and outsiders in a sustainable fashion that would provide long-term benefits for the community.

Despite Tegare's isolation, it is clear that the problems facing Tegare are not facing only this village but are instead regional, chronic problems of underdevelopment and incomplete reconstruction. The responsibilities for reconstruction and economic development do lie in part on the municipal government and, as such, the citizens of Tegare should be able to appeal to the government to meet their needs. Their inability to do so, as already documented, derives in part from leaders' lacking democratic skills and in part from the absence of an institution that legitimately and permanently represents the citizens of Tegare.

In part as a result of demographic trauma and also as a result of unsuccessful experiences working together in the past (or an absence of any such experiences), citizens of Tegare generally have very low expectations for themselves and their neighbors regarding what they can or might contribute to the community itself. However, the road project in Tegare began changing some of those expectations and there is every reason to believe that additional, *successful* projects designed to have concrete benefit to the community, entail cooperation of the local government, and transfer important democratic skills to citizens in Tegare could result in greater community entrepreneurship and improved quality of life in Tegare.

# KAMENICA

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## Introduction

It is almost possible to visit the village of Kamenica without realizing the devastating impact that the war had on this community. The once completely destroyed village has been rebuilt and is noteworthy in its very wholeness. Upon closer examination, it is true that some ruins remain—the white minaret extends not from a mosque but from the concrete outline of what will soon be a mosque. The specters of war cling to the outskirts of the village, which is an island of life on a stretch of road otherwise marked only by villages' skeletons. The returnee population consists almost entirely of Bosniaks and Serbs, most of their Croat neighbors have not returned. Unemployment is enormous, but resources trickle into the village from family members living abroad. Despite the village's geographic isolation, the Mjesna Zajednica and the Teslić-based NGO 'Futura Plus' have long served as reliable, effective bridges to the municipal government and the outside world.

## Community Entrepreneurship and Institutional Leadership

### *The Mjesna Zajednica: Community Center of Gravity and Lifeline Beyond*

Residents of Kamenica—both Serb and Bosniak, desperately poor and somewhat comfortable, young and old, from oppositely located hamlets—all identify the Mjesna Zajednica as the place they would go if there was a problem in their neighborhood. The leadership of the institution is trusted, but above all else the institution itself is trusted as a problem-solver and source of initiatives that benefit the community at large. This trust appears to be largely based on tradition and democratic representation. In part, the Mjesna Zajednica is trusted because it has always played a central role in community life (before, during and after the war). However, some of this trust is based on the fact that the Mjesna Zajednica's executive board (Savjet) is democratically elected by villagers and guarantees villagers representation on a number of grounds. Each hamlet of the village, which translates into each ethnicity as well, is guaranteed representation (and elects their own representative) to the Savjet. Residents of each hamlet are able to attend Mjesna Zajednica meetings themselves as well as relate their problems and needs to their own representative (and neighbor) over coffee.

Perhaps as important as the Mjesna Zajednica's representative system is its established track record in delivering benefits to the community through attracting donations and organizing projects. This is in part a testament to the individual leadership of the Mjesna Zajednica's current president, Ramiz Durmasević. In addition to caring deeply about his community, Ramiz possesses some of the important democratic skills that are so often lacking among BH citizens due to his time peripherally involved with the

government before the war. Due to that experience, Ramiz has confidence when speaking with government officials and is generally able to frame his advocacy in a persuasive manner. One example of his ability to organize and advocate effectively is the fact that he generally ensures that project ideas are developed to the best of the community's abilities and capacities prior to securing funding so that as soon as funding is obtained, work can begin. In addition, Ramiz's leadership is strengthened by the fact that he is, compared to many in Kamenica, one of the village's wealthier citizens. He, like all other citizens of Kamenica, struggles to meet his family's needs but, unlike many of them, runs a small business and has a reliable (if small) source of income. This earns him respect, as well as putting him into a position where he can contribute to community projects with his own money. This puts undue strain on him as a leader and person, but it has enabled certain activities to take place and increased others' respect for him.

*Futura Plus: A bridge to the outside with a commitment to Kamenica*

The Teslić-based NGO Futura Plus (which partnered with Mozaik to build a first-aid center in Kamenica) has worked in Kamenica since the first returnees arrived. The Mjesna Zajednica and Futura Plus have a strong relationship built on trust and mutual respect. Futura Plus generally relies on the Mjesna Zajednica to approach its staff with ideas, but also constantly watches for opportunities to channel funding into Kamenica. Said one employee of Futura Plus, 'We do not work only to help those who cannot help themselves at all, we work (in Kamenica) because people can help themselves some. Futura Plus has been present since before the authorities visited and before they reconstructed the first house in Kamenica...in Kamenica they still do not have all the information about who could help them. Futura Plus is the link.'

Futura Plus could not simply pass this information along to Kamenica because people in the village lack internet access and are geographically isolated and would therefore be unable to pursue opportunities effectively. Futura Plus' work in Teslić provides them with more regular access to government officials and businesses, and their growing reputation nationally as an effective NGO adds to their awareness of potential support for Kamenica. In addition, many international agencies are hesitant or unwilling to support Mjesna Zajednicas directly because they are hybrid governmental organizations and most donors emphasize NGO work. This adds one more benefit to Kamenica's relationship with Futura Plus as it makes the community more attractive to international donors.

However, a key component of Kamenica, and Futura Plus', successes has been that both the Mjesna Zajednica and Futura Plus serve as bridges not solely or even primarily to the international donors but instead to domestic sources of funding, including foundations like 'Žena Ženama' and Mozaik and the municipal government. By supporting these relationships, and especially by linking Kamenica to the municipal government, Futura Plus has avoided one of the common pitfalls in post-war B&H: cultivating relationships with international donors at the expense of local relationships.

## **The Nature and Role of Expectations**

The primary difference between pre-war Kamenica and post-war Kamenica is economic: with unemployment defining community life now, it is impossible for the community to return to its days of pre-war autonomy and self-financing (through resident donations) of community projects. However, the lingering tradition of autonomy and the strong collective identity of Kamenica as a place where people love to work continue to feed a certain sense of self-sufficiency within the village, despite its somewhat deceptive nature given the economic barriers to autonomy. It is notable that post-war assistance to Kamenica, apparently largely by coincidence, reaffirmed that sense of community autonomy by consisting largely of donated materials which required villagers to build their own houses, schools, and other buildings. Kamenica's Mjesna Zajednica did not intentionally seek donations of this nature, but this structure of assistance may have preserved Kamenica's character.

### *Expectations of Self*

Most villagers are very proud that they rebuilt their homes themselves, adding only as an afterthought that the materials to build the homes were often donated by aid agencies. Individuals expect to contribute to anything happening in the village because they have never had it any other way. As one 70-year old man, who still works to fix the road by his home said, 'It cannot be any other way! If we need a mosque, a school, water, roads—we work on it ourselves.' It is noteworthy that at 70, this man could easily consider himself too old for physical labor, but he and others his age do not in fact see themselves as past their ability to contribute to physical activities.

There is also no gender disparity in people's expectations of who should and will contribute to physical labor both rebuilding family homes and constructing village buildings. Women, despite being burdened by the tasks of providing for large families, generally help with physical construction. They are, however, entirely excluded from the decision-making process and have no expectation that they might be included in the process. This is in part a result of the significant familial burdens that women in Kamenica bear but also an effect of the role of the all-male Mjesna Zajednica. Because Mjesna Zajednicas are all male bodies, the dominant role of the Mjesna Zajednica perpetuates women's exclusion from the decision-making process.

As is clear from the generally held expectation in Kamenica that people will provide for themselves 'as they always have,' people's expectations of their own roles in Kamenica are a reflection of past experiences. One young person in the village, Enes, has begun a program called Eko-Kids designed to educate local children about ecology and help keep the village clean of litter through collective actions. He has assumed this position, a voluntary one, because it was something that he wanted to do for the village. When asked if he thinks he can make do anything to make life better in Kamenica, he paused and said, 'I think that we are doing that. Eko-Kids is something that up to now has been working on that.'



### *Expectations of Neighbors*

People's high expectations of themselves with respect to their community generally translate into expectations of reciprocal contributions by neighbors. Once again, this expectation is largely the result of tradition. As one man recounted of life before the war, 'Those of us who had success, those of us who worked gave money and everything. That's how the society was.' There was a tradition of autonomy in Kamenica that began soon after World War II as the village began rapidly expanding. Local villagers even constructed their own water system about thirty years ago.

Another man remembered the pre-war days, 'We took care of ourselves. We bought things for ourselves between ourselves. Whatever was necessary, how much money for building materials—that kind of thing we had to buy and work. That's how we were, there were no donations before the war.' One element of this tradition's continuation in the post-war period was that the Mjesna Zajednica did not entirely cease to exist during the war, though it did not function during the fighting. As soon as peace returned, the members of the Mjesna Zajednica from before the war and some additional community members (most of them now members of the Mjesna Zajednica) began organizing the return by contacting IFOR and international aid agencies.

This commitment to working together, and expectation that neighbors will contribute to collective projects, is strengthened and facilitated by the high level of trust within the village. This trust is in part facilitated by the fact that many villagers are at least distantly related and there have been few newcomers in recent times. In addition, most villagers say that they do not know who was responsible for destroying their village as the property of Croats, Serbs and Muslims was all destroyed. Interethnic harmony has long been a staple of life in Kamenica, in part facilitated by the fact that differing ethnicities have always lived geographically separated but socially integrated. As such, there are not opportunities for any inter-ethnic distrust to interfere with relationships between first neighbors and there is not sufficient inter-ethnic distrust to interfere with hamlet-hamlet relationships at the collective level. Even at the individual level, despite the history and the geographic separation, some residents do consider those of differing ethnicities among their neighbors.

Other fault lines of distrust do exist within the village, among them economic and educational disparities. Young people who are less educated than others (especially those who did not finish high school) say that they often feel uncomfortable among their peers because of this difference. In addition, some people in the village who are wealthier than others say that they often feel uncomfortable because people from the village believe that they are far wealthier than they are just because they have family members living abroad. Generally, however, this distrust does not run deep and as one leader said, 'We are united when we need something. We can be against one another, but when we need to be all united, we are not against anyone. We have this mentality that brings us together, which involves everyone, which unites all of us.'

### *Expectations of Government*

As a result of Kamenica's high level of autonomy, many citizens have remarkably low expectations of the government. Despite the fact that the village largely lacked both running water and telephone connections in early 2005, few citizens considered this to be a government shortcoming. In addition, Kamenica's voter turnout is not typically as high as Tegare's, due largely to the fact that young people, present in Kamenica but absent in Tegare, tend not to vote in B&H.<sup>7</sup> In addition, few if any villagers who are not or have not been members of the Mjesna Zajednica have spoken directly with a government official in the last five years, taking their concerns instead to the Mjesna Zajednica and relying on their representatives to relay their concerns to the government. Mjesna Zajednica representatives, in turn, speak frequently with the government, mostly through the advocacy of their president, Ramiz. Ramiz speaks with the mayor or other government officials a few times a week, according to his own account. Ramiz generally feels that the government has behaved properly toward Kamenica, even though it is a predominantly Bosniak returnee village in the Republic of Srpska and under the government of a Serb mayor. Said Ramiz, 'We have not had any problems ... the Serb government in Teslić has always been correct with us.'

Additional advocacy by members of Futura Plus' staff have resulted in increased effectiveness in the relationship between the municipality and the village. However, this relationship remains imperfect and seems to be accepted because people do not know how to make it better. For example, the Mozaik funded first-aid center in Kamenica was to be staffed by a doctor provided by the authorities in Teslić but the doctor has never materialized. Most villagers are aware of this problem, but few expect it to be resolved or feel that they can do anything to resolve it. If the Mjesna Zajednica cannot or does not solve the problem, citizens tend to believe that it cannot be solved.

While citizens may be limited in their expectations of the government, both Futura Plus and the Mjesna Zajednica do expect the government to assist people in Kamenica with certain things, such as the water supply, that should fall under the purview of the local government. However, the perspectives of two local government officials indicated that Kamenica's relatively autonomous functioning has reduced its priority in their eyes compared to other villages. Said one official, responsible for assisting returnees, "Kamenica was totally ruined, there was not one house standing. However, today they have built substantially, most of them have returned, they even have many children there."

The mayor was more clear in his analysis of Kamenica, saying, "They (in Kamenica) do not need a lot, they need only a little bit. They have all new houses..." While this is true, the lack of running water and telephone connections contribute to the isolation of the village and substantially reduce quality of life.

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<sup>7</sup> Exact voter turnout data for Kamenica is not available, however most interview subjects under 30 indicated that they did not vote, as did most villagers under 30 with whom I conversed but did not officially interview.

## **Conclusions**

Kamenica is largely a success story, an example of the type of community participation, entrepreneurship and development that many sought to create or encourage in the post-war period. An analysis of how Kamenica arrived at this point is revealing: for the most part, the community expected itself and was expected by outsiders to rebuild themselves and meet their own needs. This is not to say that assistance was withheld from the village; rather, it was given in a minimalist fashion that did not interfere with the community's functioning, internal mechanisms.

In addition, Kamenica's close relationship with Futura Plus (as mediated by the Mjesna Zajednica) has been crucial to its success. Futura Plus staff members possess key democratic skills that are a result of both their pre-war education (all finished university) and their post-war crash course in advocacy and organizing gained through the assistance of the French organization AFC and the literature that one development worker distributed to them. Because Futura Plus functions not only as a bridge between the community and international organizations (as many NGOs in B&H do) but also as a bridge between the community and the local government, Futura Plus has assisted with the reconstruction and development of Kamenica without corrupting the Mjesna Zajednica's expectations of the government or relationships with it.

However, even in Teslić the government seems to be escaping some of its responsibilities through playing on Kamenica's tradition of autonomy (which seems to be an unconscious shortchanging of the community) and stumbling upon the barrier to development throughout B&H: the lack of any prosperous economy to speak of. The municipality, in cooperation with UNDP, completed a development strategy report in April 2005 for 2005-2010, a document that is easily accessible for citizens (who know of its existence) and other interested parties. However important this plan is, it alone cannot account for the fact that the primary barriers to further development in Kamenica are the structural barriers to development in B&H, above all, the lack of a functioning, productive and prosperous economy.

# KUPRES

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## **Introduction**

Kupres was once a city that attracted workers from across the former Yugoslavia to its state-owned industrial firms; those workers often settled in the prosperous area of Kupres that bordered on a ski mountain resort and was only a few hours from the Croatian coast. The multiethnic municipality was considered an important strategic point during the war and, as such, was devastated by war's destruction. Kupres was reestablished as a small town in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) in 1995, and Croat families soon began returning to and rebuilding their homes there. Bosniak and Serb residents began their return in 2001. The overall size of Kupres today is approximately 25 percent of its original size.

Although residents began returning nearly a decade ago, Kupres has little collective life to speak of, with most community initiatives and institutions just now beginning to take shape. Despite the fact that Kupres is a relatively urban location and the center of the municipal government, Kupres too demonstrates the importance of effective bridges between people and government—even when the geographic distance to be bridged is minimal.

## **Community Entrepreneurship and Institutional Leadership**

### *Absence of Community Institutions*

Before the war, Kupres municipality was organized into five Mjesna Zajednicas. However, the Mjesna Zajednicas disintegrated when the population dispersed during the war (mostly to the Croatian city of Split and other areas on the Dalmatian coast) and never formed again once people returned. Infrastructure problems and community concerns were generally cared for through the Mjesna Zajednicas before the war; as one man said, 'Before the war, we all worked together here through the Mjesna Zajednicas and the municipality, everything together.'

In post-war Kupres, there is no single channel through which citizens can solve collective problems or organize community activities. Instead, a series of small NGOs, generally focused on specific issues, have sprouted up over the years. However, these organizations have not shown long-term sustainability and as such have not become institutionalized community structures. One NGO existed during the immediate return period focused on providing children with after-school activities and ecological education, but later stopped functioning because the leader (a Kupres native) went on to work in other places and did not have sufficient community demand or support to continue in Kupres. An 'Omladinski Klub' (Youth Club) was formed by the local high school social studies teacher and successfully provided an internet cafe, English and German classes, and other activities for high-school aged youth until its offices were robbed in May 2004. Since that

time, the organization has not had the funding to restart. However, even when it was functioning, the Youth Club was largely perceived as a one-man job, despite the fact that they youth were quite involved in governing the organization and managing its everyday affairs.

### *Nascent Organizations to Meet Collective Needs*

Two organizations have recently formed in Kupres: 'Kupreški Visorovan,' an ecological association formed in July 2004 and 'Humana,' a social welfare society formed in 2005. Kupreški Visorovan has already gained recognition and a striking amount of local trust following its successful petition against a stone quarry that the government had hoped to open in the area. The group was founded with the goal of protecting and promoting Kupres' ecological and cultural monuments and has forty members and 9 board members. In addition to the petition drive (which garnered 1,000 signatures), Kupreški Visorovan has revived some activities that pre-war Mjesna Zajednicas organized, such as the annual 'Most Beautiful Yard' competition and the Kupres-wide gardening day. Many members of the organization are elected members of the city council or unelected municipal government employees, but the organization has not cultivated a relationship with the government out of a desire to preserve its independence and ability to freely criticize the government.

Following the successful petition drive, Kupreški Visorovan has gained the trust of many in Kupres and some people even say that the association is where they go for help. Said one man, a member of the association, 'For the most part, the way our situation is, we call (the president of Kupreški Visorovan) and the association for most of our problems. They did some work against the quarry, they blocked it. They have, or their association has, built the most as far as I know. The others cannot do that.' The leader of Kupreški Visorovan is widely trusted by people in the community, which is a particular feat given that she did not live in Kupres for the twenty years prior to the war (see *Expectations of Neighbors* for further consideration of this). She was, however, born in Kupres and leads Kupreški Visorovan out of the same love of Kupres that she draws upon to motivate others to work with the association. The leadership of the organization is often hampered the organization's lack of financial resources, with one board member saying, 'We have ideas in our head but cannot realize them!'

The same is true for the newer organization, Humana, which seeks to meet the basic needs of Kupres' poorest citizens, especially the elderly and the ill. Ideas for future activities, according to Humana's founder, include establishing help for the elderly and sick children, providing a response to social concerns in Kupres, and convening workshops for young people providing education about alcohol and drug abuse, sexuality and AIDS. While Humana also plans to collect membership fees, many of its proposed activities also possess the possibility for government assistance or cooperation in the delivery of social services.

### *Relationships Between Community Groups and the Municipal Government*

Humana and the Omladinski Klub are the two groups that seem most likely to achieve government support for their activities given that they tackle some of the problems that individuals in Kupres identify as their primary problems and many of which fall under the auspices of government responsibility or interest. In part, this is a result of the low expectations of local government endemic in Kupres (see *Expectations of Government*), but it also a result of a low level of democratic skills among organization leaders in Kupres. Most urgently, the leaders of each of the organizations lack coalition building skills despite enjoying friendly relationships with one another. The Omladinski Klub and Humana in particular overlap in their goals regarding seminars for young people, and the Omladinski Klub and Kupreški Visorovan could potentially combine efforts for local ecological actions, an area of work that the Omladinski Klub has already ventured into. However, the leaders of these groups, while individually willing to help one another with logistical and other challenges, have not identified areas for collaboration or given thought to the fact that as a coalition they might be more effective in garnering government support for their work, when appropriate.

Despite repeated claims of optimism by leaders and citizens of Kupres, leaders seem resigned to the fact that the government will not invest in their efforts *even when those efforts overlap with municipal interests and responsibilities*. In addition, leaders lack the ability to strategically frame their activities and needs, such that they do not portray their work to preserve Kupres' ecology as being in line with government interests in promoting tourism. Finally, leaders' abilities to convince others to invest in their groups seems to have been corrupted by a history of dealing with international donors that required an emphasis on how poor they were and what they did not have. Kupres, in fact, has often been deemed "too wealthy" for assistance, given the poverty in other parts of the country, and as such its leaders have learned to emphasize what the community does not have in order to have a chance for funding. However, in dealing with the government and local businesses, a strategy emphasizing what the organizations and community do have to offer might be far more effective.

### **The Nature and Role of Expectations**

Kupres escaped one of the worst fates of war in much of B&H, internal (often violent) division along ethnic lines. Given both that and the fact that many community members were financially capable of rebuilding their homes on their own, the community has often been overlooked by post-war development efforts. The poorest members of the community have had some access to micro-credit programs, but most community residents are considered too well-off for such humanitarian programs while remaining financially incapable of supporting private bank loans. Economics in the community have yet to normalize after the war and the community's economic development plan is highly dependent on ski tourism, spurring an increase in families offering private pension to visitors. However, this economic strategy breads a certain level of

competition between citizens, which seems to be heightening pre-existing tensions and distrust between residents of Kupres.

### *Expectations of Self*

Drawing back at least to the period of the post-war return, citizens in Kupres have largely been responsible for themselves. In contrast to many other areas in the country, even the return was conducted largely by family units rather than organized through any governmental efforts or community institutions. The HVO administration<sup>8</sup> of the city did encourage people to return soon after they regained control of the city but did not create an infrastructure for return. People expected to rebuild themselves in part because their pre-war economic well-being had instilled in them a sense of self-sufficiency.

Kupres, unlike both Kamenica and Tegare, does not have a gender disparity in expectations of self vis-à-vis community efforts. This seems largely due to two related factors: (1) family size is much smaller in Kupres than in the two villages, and (2) there is no gender-based education disparity in Kupres as there was in both villages. Women are almost as likely as men to participate in and lead community actions and there was no tendency for women to defer to men in offering opinions about the community or organizations' work.

However independent they are accustomed to being, residents of Kupres are increasingly seeing themselves as additionally responsible to their neighbors and other inhabitants of Kupres in order to improve life throughout the town. Community leaders and participants in community activities speak of themselves as catalysts of change—when they speak of themselves in the collective form. When asked if they could make life in Kupres better, individuals frequently responded by immediately changing from first person singular to first person plural and saying, 'I think we can make it better here.'

Most individuals, however, lack ideas for how they might be able to make life in Kupres better, even if they do believe themselves capable of working for change. Typically, people involved in collective actions or even elected officials began their work after being specifically asked by others in the community to do so. One man in Kupres researched and wrote a report about the timber industry and ecology for Kupreški Visorovan, though he is not a member of the association. When asked why he volunteered in this fashion, he replied, 'I love Kupres!' His response to why he is not a member of the organization was even more revealing, "They did not look for me."

### *Expectations of Neighbors*

Part of the reason that people's willingness to engage in collective work has not been fully taken advantage of in Kupres seems to be related to the fact that despite their own willingness to work for the

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<sup>8</sup> The HVO was the Bosnian Croat Army.

collective good, Kupres' citizens are reluctant to believe that their neighbors are equally likely to work in such a fashion. This again reflects the independence to which residents of Kupres are accustomed as well as the distrust that runs throughout much of the community. As noted earlier, the economic situation of the community includes significant disparities—a natural source of distrust, especially given that many associate the wealthiest people in the village with those who profited from the war, precisely the event that cost most people everything they owned. Another element of this distrust is that many residents of Kupres who did not live there immediately before the war have settled in Kupres since the end of the war. Despite the fact that some of them were born in Kupres, these people are often viewed with distrust and life-long residents of Kupres (excepting the war period) tend to feel that these residents are not fully 'Kuprešaki.' Interestingly, many of the community leaders are in fact just these citizens who settled in Kupres after the war.

Residents of Kupres acknowledge this distrust, with many commenting that trust between neighbors only exists up to a certain point. Said one person, 'We trust each other (only) so far, a little bit more with common people, like this, who scrape by a living. But those who live well don't see the majority.' To compound the problem, many citizens say that distrust is increasing as competition for profits from tourism increase.

### *Expectations of Government*

The low expectations that people in Kupres have for each other are outdone by the extraordinarily low expectations that they have for their local government. The most frequent response to questions about approaching the government for assistance with a community problem was laughter. One community leader said, 'I have not looked for help from the government in any concrete way. Everyone thinks that that matters, but from the government there will not be anything.'

One aspect of these low expectations of the government, which is both common in its spread across the country and remarkable given the recent socialist history of the country, is low voter turnout. Even among people who did vote (which in Kupres included only 48% of the population), expectations for the government are low. One man's comment about voting was particularly revealing, 'I voted, but I don't see anything done of it. All of the candidates run the same campaign,' he said. He then went on to dismiss the importance of politicians' failings by saying, simply, 'But that's how it is.'

### **Conclusion**

This failure of even civil society actors, as well as almost all citizens, to expect or demand anything from their government has contributed to the stagnancy that is apparent in Kupres. Residents of Kupres seem to accept situations that they recognize as inadequate for lack of a means of achieving a better option. This resignation to the situation as it is what many people refer to as apathy when talking about civil society in B&H. However, given the level to which individuals in Kupres are prepared to work (and often have already



attempted to work) for the collective benefit, this seems entirely inadequate as a characterization of them and their mindset. There is an element of stagnancy in Kupres and elsewhere that inhibits participation, borne in part of low expectations. However, this is influenced primarily by frustration with past failures, a lack of key (democratic) skills to work successfully in the current context, and low levels of trust between neighbors, local institutions, and the government.

The low level of trust between neighbors in Kupres is likely at least partially a result of the fact that there is no successful experience that has incorporated close relationships between a number of citizens for the collective good. While the petition included a quarter of the entire municipality's citizens, it was not an action that required people to interact with one another and build trust. It did, however, increase trust in Kupreški Visorovan as an organization and as such positions Kupreški Visorovan well to organize such an action that would build trust in the future, should they find the resources for such a project. One of the challenges to building community trust in Kupres is the fact that there are no "easy" focus points for such a project, like roads or water, as there are in more economically desperate places. However, speaking with a number of people in Kupres it becomes quickly apparent that the local environment is considered very important here and the dearth of activities for young people is recognized across the board as a major problem facing the community.

One last piece of the Kupres story that is particularly noteworthy is that the lack of a bridge between citizens and government has fueled citizens' low expectations of the government. Many civil society efforts focus on creating bridges between geographically isolated communities and the government bodies that serve them; however, Kupres (the seat of the municipal authorities) offers evidence that the space between citizens and the government can be an equally daunting canyon in a semi-urban area as in a rural area. This gap between citizens and the government is perpetuated by the continuation of the status quo and reflects both an infrastructural distance between citizens and the municipality (reflected in the absence of institutions capable of intervening productively with the government) and a cultural distance (reflected in citizens' low expectations of the government).

However, Kupres offers hope that this situation can and has already begun to change. After years without support or intervention, Kupres' citizens have reached the boiling point of their frustration and are determined to find solutions. If the nascent organizations can organize activities and establish a track record of effectiveness, there is every reason to believe that they will both effectively meet citizens' needs and substantially build trust by bringing citizens together.

## **LOOKING FORWARD:**

### **SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT**

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The experiences of Tegare, Kamenica, and Kupres all point to the importance of local institutions for community development and in shaping citizens' expectations of themselves, their neighbors, organizations, and their government. However, the stories of these communities also indicate that a focus on civil society institutions above all other actors can have unintended negative consequences that actually detract from communities' existent, endogenous sense of community entrepreneurship. Kupres, Kamenica and Tegare provide insight into the importance of individuals' democratic skills and of institutions with long-standing commitments to serving as a bridge between communities and local governments as well as external actors (including donors). In addition, individuals' expectations of themselves and their neighbors influence social cohesion and their expectations of institutions and the government affect community entrepreneurship and development.

As each of these communities has shown, *experiences change expectations*, especially in that organizations and institutions with a track record of success *in a given community* can fundamentally change not only individuals' expectations of those organizations but also of those that they have for themselves and their neighbors. Least clear from this research is what is necessary to change citizens' expectations of and relationships with the government, given the chronic and deep-seated nature of citizens' low or even negative expectations of the government. This is an issue that warrants further examination and is the topic of ongoing, related Mozaik research. However, what is abundantly clear from this work is the fact that such productive relationships with the government, especially at the institutional rather than personal level, are absolutely essential for the existence of community entrepreneurship and local community development.

The following conclusions focus on what this research indicates for what donors, civil society actors, Mjesna Zajednicas, and other development actors can do to encourage both improved social cohesion and community entrepreneurship and, over the long-term, development. Different donors and organizations will have different possibilities for integrating these conclusions into their work, but community development would be served by increased attention to development players who fall outside of the definition of civil society actors as well as civil society actors' relationships with such development players, *including both individual citizens and government offices and officials*.

#### **I. Supporting the Right Institutions**

*Community-Based Organizations serving and based in the community targeted for development* are essential starting points for projects due to their long-term commitment, if they prove sustainable, to operating in the community. When considering supporting such organizations, assessing the local sources of

trust and fault lines of distrust are essential tasks, as demonstrated by the unexpected sources of distrust in the communities included in this study. Support that emphasizes broad collaboration and inclusion of individual citizens *as well as other groups operating in the community* have the best chances of overcoming distrust or low expectations.

*Non-civil society actors within the community* are also often key (and frequently overlooked) development players in the local community. In B&H in particular, such actors most notably include Mjesna Zajednicas, which have frequently been ignored or excluded by donor organizations or agencies. Such institutions might have the highest deposits of local trust and as such are essential components of any efforts designed to either build or draw upon social cohesion for development. As is the case with Mjesna Zajednicas, such institutions are likely to be imperfect (notably, Mjesna Zajednicas exclude women from the decision-making processes), but rather than creating new institutions or relying on organizations without a long-term commitment to the community, efforts to reform or strengthen existing institutions would capitalize upon, rather than corrupt, endogenous community entrepreneurship and other productive community and/or cultural characteristics.

*Secondary Community Institutions with a long-term or permanent commitment to the community targeted for development* are valuable partners in development efforts because such actors are uniquely positioned to build bridges between the community and the ‘outside world,’ including donors and local government officials. Assessing (and building) the level of trust that such institutions enjoy in local communities is a key component of strengthening them as bridges to resources outside of the communities—the key factor in cultivating a sense of community entrepreneurship, especially in poor communities.

## **II. Building Institutional Leadership and Lasting Relationships**

Building such bridges to resources outside of communities themselves, and especially to the local government, requires that community leaders possess basic *democratic skills—including the ability to advocate effectively, strategically frame community initiatives and investments, build coalitions with other development actors, and mobilize citizens for collective action*. Mozaik’s approach to community driven development provides one model of interventions designed, in part, to transfer democratic skills to local citizens and leaders, but this is an imperfect model. In particular, there is a widespread deficit of the skills necessary for coalition building and advocacy (including strategic framing). Current Mozaik research is analyzing the most effective ways to transfer such skills to community leaders and members through (and for) development projects. This current research includes an emphasis on *institutional rather than individual leadership*, recognizing that skills often must be transferred not only from experienced outside (though not necessarily foreign) actors to community leaders but also from community leaders to other citizens. This trickle-down leadership skills transfer helps to ensure not only the sustainability of the organization or

institution but also the capability of citizens to demand effective action from the institution and to organize outside of the institution as necessary.

### III. The Importance of Expectations

Many of the patterns of citizen participation in community activities and community entrepreneurship can be traced back to a series of expectations. One of the most important aspects of this research is to document the fact that expectations can and do change, sometimes rather quickly, and that those who seek to promote local development in B&H can and should focus, at least in part, on changing these influential expectations. First and foremost, *citizens' expectations of themselves* shape the dynamics of community participation and entrepreneurship at the grassroots. Gender and age are particularly strong factors shaping citizens' expectations of themselves in many communities, often due to either education disparities or traumatic demographic changes brought on by either the war or the economic situation in isolated communities, or both. Even expectations based on such intrinsic characteristics as gender and age are able to be altered through specific outreach to citizens that invites them to participate in community activities and organizations in a particular (and appropriate) fashion.

Likewise, *citizens' expectations of their neighbors* are an effect of the level of trust within the community and, like trust itself, can change over time but usually do so in gradual phases. Community initiatives that involve citizens directly as volunteers and include personal, direct interactions between neighbors are key to overcoming distrust of various origins by building both citizens' expectations of themselves (as noted above) and, at the same time, of their neighbors. The belief in reciprocity, the idea that not only will a citizen work for his neighbor but that also the neighbor will work for him, is essential to establishing the level of neighborhood trust necessary for true social cohesion.

Social cohesion alone, however, is not enough to spur local development, even within single communities. This social cohesion must be paired with a sense of community entrepreneurship, which requires bridges to the outside world. In order to gain citizens' trust, institutions must establish a track record of bringing success to the community targeted for development. External actors can assist in this process by funding institutions and especially secondary community institutions with a long-term or permanent commitment to the target community in their efforts to provide concrete benefit to local citizens. This support can (and already has) helped to change *citizens' expectations of the institutions that serve them* such that citizens' demand effective representation from NGOs, CBOs, and Mjesna Zajednicas alike.

However, in efforts to support such institutions, the role of government cannot (but often has been) ignored or relegated to the margins. In many cases, municipal officials are unaware of the various development activities being conducted in their municipalities (especially by international donors) and often they are not involved in the process. *Citizens' expectations of the local government* are so low that they rarely demand the support that they are due from their elected representatives. One of the most important

differences between communities with a sense of community entrepreneurship and those without it lies in the relationships between citizens, institutions and the local government, such that those communities where reliable and effective bridges between the community and the government exist are more likely than those without such bridges to have an endogenous source of community activities.

### **A Last Word about Development Actors**

This work provides a glimpse of the benefits that socially cohesive communities with a sense of community entrepreneurship might achieve (illustrated by Kamenica's relative success) and provides some insight for how such communities might be supported. The key aspect of reliable and effective bridges between the community and the outside world returns us to the importance of civil society actors but also illustrates the fact that some of these bridges (such as Mjesna Zajednicas) can be neglected in efforts to promote civil society.

Promoting civil society usually means supporting civil society actors, an important aspect of community development but, within the development discourse at least, a strong civil society is really a means to an end rather than an end goal in and of itself. Over the last couple of years, development actors in B&H have realized that civil society actors' links to citizens were inadequate at best, and some efforts, including those of Mozaik, have strengthened those links. While many recognize the similar weakness of interactions between government and civil society actors, this research emphasizes the importance of not only strengthening those links but of focusing on civil society actors' *and other development players'* relationships with the government, citizens, and one another.

The vision of separate organizations and donors focusing on different elements of community development or working only on certain elements of developing social cohesion and community entrepreneurship may be attractive in its manageability; however, *while changes are gradual, the approach must be comprehensive*. This work has demonstrated the feedback effect between social cohesion and community entrepreneurship such that community initiatives are strengthened by existing social cohesion and successful community initiatives (one result of community entrepreneurship) build social cohesion. One of the key tasks in working toward local development, requiring both social cohesion and community entrepreneurship, requires use at the national level of one of the skills lacking at the local level: coalition building. Organizational and individual leaders in the field of development must build meaningful partnerships among themselves and with relevant government officials (at both municipal and upper levels of government) in order to share information, strategies and (sometimes) programs in order to work toward a more comprehensive vision of community development. A piecemeal approach to development not only cannot achieve lofty goals, but also carries the risk of reducing citizens' trust in institutions and their willingness to actively participate in the development of their communities.